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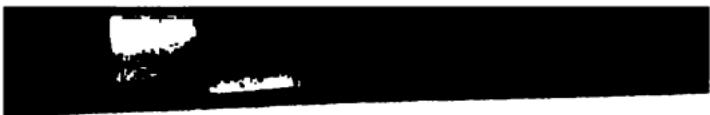
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48. 1626.







SOCIAL ZOOLOGIES BY ALBERT SMITH.

PROFUSELY ILLUSTRATED.

~~~~~  
**THE GENT.**

~~~~~  
THE BALLET-GIRL.

~~~~~  
**'STUCK-UP' PEOPLE.**

~~~~~  
THE IDLER UPON TOWN.

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THE NATURAL HISTORY
OF THE
IDLER UPON TOWN.



BY ALBERT SMITH.

ILLUSTRATED BY A. HENNING.

LONDON: D. BOGUE, 86 FLEET STREET.

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER. I	—Introductory	1
II.	—Of the West-end Lounger	9
III.	—Of their Haunts	14
IV.	—Of the Pantheon, considered in relation to the Idler	24
V.	—Concerning Exhibition Loungers	36
VI.	—Of the Mooner	46
VII	—The Mooner (continued)	59
VIII.	—Of the Mooner at an old Tavern	64
IX.	—Of the Lowther Arcade, viewed with re- spect to the Idler	71
X.	—Of the Park Idler	81
XI.	—Of the Lounger at the Theatre	87
XII.	—Of the Visitor to London	98
XIII.	—The Visitor to London (continued)	109
XIV.	—The Street Boy	110



THE IDLER UPON TOWN.



CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.



EAR READER!
Once more, do we offer you our hand in greeting; not with the slight formality of heretofore, but we hope as an old friend. From the period when we first communed together in buoyant company, haply the whims and sunshine

of our harmless pages have driven away an occasional cloud of vexation. And if we have not exactly met at the same board, or sauntered together on the same promenade, yet let us regard each other with such feelings of companionship, as a passing opinion in which you agreed with us, or found your own ideas reflected, should generate.

We would commence our new volume with the usual invocation used since the time of Virgil, when he requested the Muse to inform him respecting "*quo numine lasso*" with other matters; but we have frequently found, after every spell we could summon to our aid, that no muse appeared to inspire us. We almost think the lady has been so much called upon of late, to no purpose, by various amateurs, that when an author in sober earnest raises the cry of "Help!" she refuses to come.

Neither can we hope for any necromantic assistance from the most potent incantations:



THE IDLER UPON TOWN.

3



even if we illuminated our laboratory (by which, be it understood, we mean our solitary study) with candles made from Madame

Tussaud's choicest figures melted down—if we kindled the fire which heated our alembic with the last new plays and ballads—blew it with a full band of ophicleides, trumpets, bassoons, and cornopeans; and damped its ardour when it burnt too fast with certain newspapers and periodicals. But the glamour of magic expired with Dr. Dee; and the happy purchaser of his piece of small-coal at Strawberry Hill, found no longer any visions reflected on its polished surface: the imp of darkness has not appeared since his celebrated "Walk"—possibly feeling hurt at Mr. O. Smith's assumption of his character: the race of wizards left in dudgeon, when Dobler and Philippe came to conjure at our theatres: and the wrinkled hags of old ordered relays of broomsticks at the different posting clouds on the air-roads to the Hartz mountains, and flew off,





THE IDLER UPON TOWN.

5

as soon as they became sensible that the *belles* of the evening parties of the present day, twinkling around us, possessed far more powerful spells to enchant us in their eyes and lips. Despairing, at length, to elaborate any new subjects at home, we will rush out into those never-ending miscellanies of original and striking scenes, which cost nothing to study, and never tire by their monotony—the streets of London.

We adore the streets. We know there are thousands of our fellow-men who regard them merely as the spaces included by two boundary lines of bricks and mortar for the purposes of transition from one spot to another. But we look upon them as cheap exhibitions—*al fresco* national galleries of the most interesting kind, furnishing ever-varying pictures of character or incident. And in this feeling we will loiter on the pavements of their noisy and bustling thoroughfares, and strive to draw our likenesses

from the every-day life and every-day people we may there encounter. But we will not ~~keep~~ exclusively to the streets ; if occasion requires it, we will follow the idlers of this great metropolis to their different haunts—for the idlers alone are we about to sketch in their various spheres and phases.

And so, loitering *flâneurs*, we warn you all—"a chiel's amang ye takin' notes ;" and he may be at your elbow when you least ~~expect~~ it. The simple pavement-beater of Regent Street ; the listless bachelor of small independence—that unfortunate medium, which debars him from indulging in the most available luxuries, whilst it gives him a distaste for any exertion ; the dangler about the *coulisses* of the theatres, and the pit and lobbies of the operas ; the quiet "mooners" about the streets, and frequenters of the tranquil old Fleet Street taverns ; the lounger about the doorways of *conversazioni*, and rails of the Park drive, or



THE IDLER UPON TOWN.

7

banks of the Serpentine; the mere sight-seer from the country, whom the cattle show has



brought to town; the spectator of the street exhibition--may all find a place in our *Physiology*.

And, finally, in the words of Fielding, we will submit our Zoology to the candid reader with only two requests: "first, that he will not expect to find perfection therein; and, secondly, that he will excuse some parts, if they fall short of that little merit which it is hoped may appear in others." For we would be respectful to all, and not, like the great novelist, fly in the face of the critics, upon whose comment we place great weight, ~~seeing~~ that the present is an age wherein people are governed much more by the opinions of others than by their own.



CHAPTER II.

OF THE WEST-END LOUNGER.



AS soon as the season has fairly commenced — when the first warm afternoon

in Spring tempts the delicate flowers of aristocracy from their domestic conservatories, and turns the West-end into a whirl of dust, dash, and driving, and the carriages stand along the curb of the pavement in double rows, like the lines of a race-course — when the bright planets rise at the opera, and attract a crowd of brilliant satellites

around them—when attentive young gentlemen purchase bouquets for their innamoratas at something under a guinea a-piece, and philandering young ladies throw out dark hints respecting the probability of their appearance at the next Horticultural mob at Chiswick—



when economical daughters with small allow-



ances wear themselves to thread-papers, in endeavouring to find out by what sort of harlequinade they can turn a last year's *polka* into a this year's *visite*—and extravagant sons quite frighten their mothers by the accumulation of dirty-white kid gloves discovered in the drawers of their dressing-table: at this time the Loungers appear in Regent Street.

We believe it has never yet been ascertained for a certainty where the Regent Street Loungers live when they are at home. They affect the neighbourhood of the West-end generally, and sometimes give their day address at a club; but beyond this we can give no clue to their domiciles, for some of these gay loiterers reside in localities only known to tax-collectors; gentlemen "out of the way," or leading that migratory and somewhat singular forest life known as "up a tree;" water-rate men; and people who engrave maps of London.

Men of enterprising spirit, who have contrived to invade the *penetralia* of the Lounger's home, affirm that his toilet when there, partakes more of the *Costume du Queen's Bench*, than the dashing appearance which it assumes in the



streets. There, the blouse or dressing-gown with seedy elbows, and the slippers formed of boots cut down, are the favourite articles; whilst the worked satin scarf yields to the old Joinville, or probably nothing at all; for the incomes of these men-about-town are exceedingly limited, and each "reforms his tailor's bills," during the off-season, in the fullest sense of the word. But with it all they are not precisely Gents. Their manners are quiet and unobtrusive; indeed, they are harmless fellows altogether.



is the Lounger's day. The Lounger is a man who is not interested in anything but himself. He is a man who is not interested in anything but himself. He is a man who is not interested in anything but himself. He is a man who is not interested in anything but himself.

CHAPTER III.

OF THEIR HAUNTS.



A KING Regent Street as our starting place, it is possible that the first place in which the Lounger may be found is the front room of Verrey's; and here, we regret to say, the only Gentilish phase of his character is to be seen also. He will

talk French to the waiter; not because it



is easier to him, but to show the company that he has been abroad. The dialogue, perhaps, begins like this:—

“Garsong!”

“*Oui, monsieur.*”

“Esker vooz avez des glass?”

“*Oui, monsieur.*”

“Quel glass avvay voo?”

“*Monsieur—voilà la carte.*”

“Ah! beang! donnay moi une glass der framboys et une caraffon de l'eau froid.”

“*Oui, monsieur; une carafe d'eau fraîche.*”

“Beang.”

Or the dialogue may go on thus:—

“Garsong—donnay moi un petit tass du caffay et un peu de l'eau de vie—par beancoup.”

“*Oui, monsieur: une d'mie tasse: et un p'ti verre.*”

“Et une papier des nouvelles.”

“*Plaît-il, monsieur?*”

(LOUDER) "Une papier—des nouveautés—comprenay voo?"

"*Oui, monsieur.*"

The waiter departs, and not exactly understanding that the visitor means a newspaper, brings him a paper of bonbons.

But when the journal is procured, and the same "garsong" says to him, "I will take zat paper after you, sare, if you pleece," he begins to think that he might just as well have spoken English, and feels as small as we did on our first visit to Boulogne (to which place we crossed one day from Folkestone to say we had been to France, and on which account we have affected to call it *Bou-loyne* ever since), when having summoned up courage to plunge into the pastry-cook's shop which then stood at the corner of the Rue Neuve Chaussée, where the sand toys, and eye-glasses, and ten-franc fans with feather edges are now sold, and addressed the Frenchy young lady therein presiding

with "Avez-vous de l'eau de soda?" received as a reply:—



"Oh, yes, sir, plenty of soda-water."

The pleasures of the Regent Street Lounger are attained at a very small outlay of capital. He loves the shop windows, looking upon them as gratuitous exhibitions of curious articles, and thinks that Ackermann, Fores, Delaporte, and other print and card-case merchants, deserve a piece of plate from the Loungers (if they could

only afford the subscription) in return for the very cheap amusement which their establishments offer. And we may here observe, that the paletôt is an article of dress which must have been invented expressly for these



Loingers. Thrusting their hands and, half their little walking-sticks into the hind pockets,



half-way up to the elbows, they bid defiance to the thieves, and are not driven to the trouble of perpetually sounding their coat-tails to see if their handkerchiefs and cigar-cases are safe, whilst they admire the last portrait of some fortunate horse or popular *danseuse*; the latest agreeable impropriety of Gavarni; the memorials of the road, in the "good old coaching times"—which we may hope to see superseded before long by such a cut as this, of



VENUS,

A favourite engine in the employ of the
South-Western Railway.

or the costumes of the "Dames et Seigneurs
de la Cour de Moyen Age," who always rush

into publicity at the first whisper of a fancy ball.



The covered passage through which the overland journey from Burlington Gardens to Piccadilly is generally performed, so abounds in objects of amusement to the Lounger, that, in point of cheap happiness, it becomes a perfect Burlington Arcadia. He can pass a whole afternoon therein, with the additional comfort



able feeling of security from any unexpected shower. First of all, he makes a regular inspection of every article in the picture shop at the end, which so amalgamates with the perfumer's next door that it is difficult to tell the exact line of demarcation between the caricatures and Kalydor—where Rowlandson ends and Rowland and Son begins. Then he listens to the dulcet notes of an accordion, which is perpetually playing in this favoured thoroughfare, whilst he saunters on to the fancy stationer's, and criticizes the water-colour albumified views of Venice and Constantinople, all neutral tint and burnt sienna; or falls in love with the impassioned head of La Esmeralda, and regrets such symmetrical young ladies do not dance about the streets at the present day; his attention only being withdrawn from the beautiful gipsy by two portraits of mortal angels in *very* low dresses, one of whom is asleep at one corner of the window, and the

second combing *her* hair at the other. He peers into all the artificial flower shops, to see what hidden divinities are therein concealed by the bowers of tinted gauze and *tinsel*; and having admired the languishing ladies and very nice gentlemen in the hair-dressers' windows—the latter of whom are beautiful samples of that highest popular style of handsome vulgarity, the black-hair, red-cheeks, and white-teeth school—he reads the backs of all the foreign works imported by Jeffs; and finally loses himself in an earthly paradise of painted snuff-boxes, parasols, popular music, and perfumery; together with certain articles of ladies' dress, the display of which has always struck us as being a profane revelation of the *arcana* pertaining to the toilet of a beauty. Arriving at the Piccadilly end of the arcade, he stands awhile upon the steps, tapping his boot with his stick, and wondering what can be the use of the tall blue beadle who are supposed to guard



THE IDLER UPON TOWN.

23



the entrance ; until, having been hailed successively by the conductors of every omnibus that has passed, who think he is waiting for one of their vehicles, he turns back again, and looks at everything once more—the saunter receiving fresh charms from the order of inspection being reversed.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE PANTHEON, CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO THE IDLER.



THE liberal person who threw open this bazaar as a pleasant cut, in wet weather, from Oxford Street to Marlborough Street, conferred a boon upon the Regent Street Loungers for which they cannot be too grateful. It combines the attractions of the Zoological Gardens and *National Gallery*, together with a condensed

essence of all the most entertaining shop-windows; whilst the passages between its counters, on the ground-floor, form a curious maze, or labyrinth, exceedingly perplexing to novices anxious to arrive at the other end.

Many of the Loungers, like the Gents,



have a prevalent idea that wherever they may be, they themselves form the chief points of attraction; and hence they do not regard objects so much with the intention of looking at them, as with the notion that they are being looked at the whiles. This is the reason why many of them incline to the chairs against the pillars, in the gallery up-stairs, the possession of which seats, they think, qualifies them for temporary men-about-town—a term applied to those individuals who make themselves conspicuous everywhere but in private society. And this leads us to offer you a piece of advice; not much to do with the subject, to be sure, but which may be gratuitously thrown in here. If you meet agreeable people about, in public, who amuse you with their general knowledge, or even dazzle by their brilliancy, unless you also, now and then, encounter them in respectable private circles, *do not get too intimate.*



To return to the Loungers. From this exalted situation they gaze upon the crowd below with the high bearing which a person who has been fortunate enough to get an order for a private box at the theatres assumes towards the occupiers of the pit. We fear this love of imagined superiority is a variety of an English feeling very common amongst us—that of striving to impress the crowd with an idea that we are something more than they. It fills the first class carriages of railways, and the aft part of steamboats: it covers the hassocks of the family pew, and occupies the reserved seats at Exeter Hall: it consumes champagne at public balls, and does away with much unaffected hospitality at private *réunions*: it hires a Clarence to go to a party, when a cab would answer the same purpose at one-fourth of the cost. It is confined to no degree or circle: and it is generally supposed to be a variety of the same conceit that induces

people to give apples and buns to the elephants and bears at the aforesaid Zoological Gardens.



They do not care a straw whether or no the animals are hungry; but the act of feeding *elevates them* for a time above the throng of

lookers-on, and makes them (as they think) of importance.

Should there be any pretty girls behind the stalls—a circumstance by no means uncommon at the Pantheon—the Lounger frequently passes backwards and forwards to create an impression by his stylish appearance; and whilst he is, to all appearance, minutely inspecting with much interest the packets of soap and side-combs at a neighbouring counter, he is inwardly thinking whether his trousers set without twisting, and if his attitude shows off his figure to the best advantage in the eyes of the admired one. We have stated that the means of the Lounger are limited, and, therefore, he does not lay out much money at the emporiums. Admitting, however, that he could occasionally make a few purchases, these would not much assist his suit, since the most handsome *marchandes* appear attached to the sale of feminine wares; and allowing

his readiness and power to buy, still babies' caps, habit-shirts, and worked collars, although useful in the abstract, are not much in his line.

Perhaps the only thing which annoys him



is the sudden appearance of the stall-keepers at

his elbow, as if waiting for an order, when he stops to look over any amusing counter. This is a pantomimical way of saying, "What do you wish to buy, sir?"—a refinement upon the



common practice of less retiring young ladies who preside over the gingerbread stalls at fairs.

and who, with a shade more of delicate familiarity, are wont to accost passers-by with the salutation, "Now, my dear, let me put up a pound of these spice-nuts for you." By the way, we never correctly understood ~~the~~ exhibition of so much anxiety and unflinching perseverance in the sale of what we always deemed an exceedingly nasty compound of flour, dirt, and treacle.

The Conservatory is the portion of the Pantheon which the Lounger loves to frequent, next to the galleries. He is a walking price-current of the rise and fall of the stocks—and other flowers; he knows the value of the various bouquets, and the situation of the rare plants; and he is upon terms of almost familiar acquaintance with the cockatoos and gold-fish. Indeed, his feeling towards the tame macaw is one of real gratitude, for having so often attracted the notice of old gentlemen *inclined to zoology*, who, solely occupied with

scratching the bird's poll, are unmindful of the flashing glances their young wives or daughters



are throwing around, in the general sunshine of which the delighted Lounger participates—thinking, even, that they are meant for him alone.

Were we allowed to suggest an improvement, it would be that the divan-looking apartment at the extremity might be converted into a smoking-room. As the Lounger passes through it, to make a *sortie* into Marlborough Street, he steals a momentary glimpse of his appearance in the looking-glass—of course by pure accident—and assumes an imposing carriage, that he may produce an effect upon the individuals who usually occupy the seats “to see the company go in and out,” and appear formed of nursery-governesses, old maids, and people from the country, conglomerated together in different proportions; for, in this little apartment, hall, passage, or whatever it may be called, nice persons are as rarely to be met with as pretty girls in omnibuses, or whitebait at Twickenham. The Lounger used at one time to stand in some little awe of the door-keepers, from his constant *visits*, which, he thought, attracted their notice;



: new they take no heed of him: neither does
Lascar who sweeps the crossing, and who,
being his solicitations never replied to, has
seen the Lounger up as a bad job, and placed
him, at once, on the free list.





LET us not imagine that the whole of the Regent Street Idlers belong to the class of Loungers already pourtrayed. There are very many, blest with something like avocations and resources, who are nevertheless fair specimens of the class. These are generally young men, residing in chambers, keeping their *terms*, and all sorts of things besides, and reading

for the bar; which consists in drinking a certain number of bottles of wine on certain days at the Middle Temple Hall or elsewhere; practising the flute, violin, or cornet-à-piston, as the case may be, in their rooms; and giving perpetual breakfasts to each other, more especially if they chance to have been out together the antecedent evening. This meal lasts from twelve to three, "*plus ou moins*," and consists of coffee, tea, stout, sherry, chops, eggs, herrings, and broiled ham—the parties being arrayed in slippers and shooting-jackets, or dressing-gowns borrowed from the host. The tenour of the conversation is as follows:—

“ Devilish nice party; but I feel wretchedly seedy after it.”

“ Have some Bass. I say, Hal, did you find out who that was you waltzed with after supper?”

“ What—the ‘black-eyed stunner’? Wasn’t she a *deux-temps* too—first rate!”

"I know. I had the *Olga* with her ; and she told me she's going to Kensington Gardens to-morrow."

"What capital girls we do scrape together.



What do you think she said ? "

"I don't know—let's have it."

"Shove that bottle of stout over here, Fred."

"What a funny speech for a girl!"

"No, no—nonsense ; she told me her people *were going* to give a party on the 8th, and I

should have an invitation. They live in Harley Street; all right—West India merchants."

" She's got tin, then?"

" I expect so: but what a neck and shoulders!—Ah!"

" Have you been to Dow's lately?"

" No—'pon my soul I'm ashamed. It's so long since I called; I must though. Did you read Platt's speech?"

" Rather!—capital!—pass the pepper."

And so on for an indefinite period.

These specimens of the London Idler attach themselves to the same haunts as the others we have just mentioned, but they have usually more money, and a larger circle of acquaintance; indeed, the front of the rim of their hat becomes so limp from the constant bows they make during an afternoon's stroll, that they are compelled, after a while, to turn it hind-side before for convenience.

To this class the varied exhibitions of the

metropolis afford an endless round of amusement; but perhaps the Polytechnic Institution is their chief lounge. They go down in the diving-bell, for the sake of being lionized during the thirty seconds which succeed their re-ap-



pearance from the water. They attend the magnified mud-worms, and dissolving Netley.

Abbeys and Holy Sepulchres, for the chance of sitting in the dark next to the handsome woman in the small enticing pink bonnet, who has gone in before them, and whose glove they picked up and restored to her on the stairs ; they listen, out of pure distraction, and for the twentieth time, to Professor Bachoffner's demonstration of the wonders of steam ; and they gaze at the ribbon-looms, printing-presses, and steam-engines, as well as at all the models, in rotation, until they become walking catalogues of the entire exhibition.

It is not impossible but that they may conclude their lounge by watching the progress of manufacturing a bird of paradise (blue, with a white tail), in blown glass, which they will purchase to take home with them to their chambers —a circumstance which never comes to pass, since the whole concern—bird, shade, tail, and all—gets crushed to an impalpable powder long before they reach their destination.

Au reste, these Loungers are, for the most part, gentlemanly men. Their dress, bearing, and appearance, is all in keeping; and in this



they differ widely from that lonely, unknown *class*, the sole end of whose existence appears



to be the accomplishment of a certain number of promenades about the West-end thoroughfares, unrecognising and unrecognised, with the idea that they hold their unheeded station in society by this diurnal labour. With these, dress and display are the ruling passions, and in matters of the toilet is comprised all their knowledge. They cannot see what need a man has of intellect or talent, provided his boots and trousers are fashionably faultless; and, whilst bestowing all their care on the outside of their head, they regard the brains as mere accessories to existence. Can it be credited, that we lately met one of these poor do-nothings in Regent Street, who, not content with the impression his general *contour* made upon the world, had actually dyed his moustachios, and—we write in pity and disgust—*painted his cheeks!* Should this open page meet his eye, as he listlessly gazes in some shop-window, let us be *permitted to recommend him immediately to*

wash his face at the first available accommodation, even though, for lack of means to procure better, it be beneath the pump in Burlington Gardens.

Finally, with respect to the Regent Street Loungers generally, a great advantage to all of them is the facility with which they accommodate themselves to whatever circle chance may pitch them into. They lounge on from one scene to the other, without a trace of their preceding occupation being visible. An Idler has been known on the best authority, if by chance a ticket for Her Majesty's Theatre has fallen in his way, to leave its elegant audience as soon as the Prima Donna has concluded her *finale* in the opera, and having deliberately entered the nearest retail establishment, has then and there quietly imbibed a pint of half-and-half; after which he has returned in time for the opening tableau of *Alma*, and once more taken his place, with as *aristocratic an air* as if he had been sipping

Punch à la Romaine at Hemming's from a crystal goblet, instead of draining Barclay's Entire from a pewter pot. And yet this antithesis is not merely an attribute of the Loungers alone, for the great world abounds in similar ones. Indeed, generally speaking, nothing is more widely different, as we have before attempted to show, than the dash and show-off of individuals in society, and their manner of living when at home. It may usually be taken in an inverse ratio.

Not, however, that we would abuse the Loungers for acting as above. Indeed, on the contrary, those who best make friends with circumstances, and are equally at home in *all*, however different, are usually good fellows.

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE MOONER.



FTER a diligent search in Johnson's Dictionary, to which authority we generally rush for information concerning any word, we find no other meaning given to "moon" than its ordinary astronomical signification. We must therefore coin our own epithet, and define the subject of our present chapter as an individual who *moons* about without any object, half absent, half contemplative; and differing from the majority of Loungers we have already portrayed, in being neither young nor *over-particular* in his toilette. He is most

probably an old bachelor, with a hundred and fifty pounds a-year.

In zoological classification the Mooner evidently belongs to the *Ruminantia*. He lounges and strays about, taking four times the period usually allotted to walk any distance, fiddle-faddling the space of time away in a lamentably unprofitable manner, and finding intense amusement in objects which the Regent Street Idler, or even the Gent, would pass by in contempt. The laying-down of wooden blocks, to form a new pavement, detains him a



some half-hour. The opening of a water-main, or a course of gas-pipes, is another riveting spectacle ; but the attraction of both these is exceeded by the elevation of a fresh block of stone to the top of an embryo building—which is a process of so absorbing a nature, as to make him unmindful of everything else in the world, until it is properly fixed. It is lucky for him that the view of the river has been shut out on the palace-side of Westminster Bridge, or his head would certainly grow between the balustrades, whilst he watched the laying of each successive piece of masonry, hereafter to form the new Houses of Parliament.

The Mooner, like other Idlers, is exceedingly fond of the shops—more especially those where some mechanical performance is going on in the windows. In this respect a cork-cutter's ranks very high ; he wonders what the men do with the bits they take off, and how it is they never slice their fingers. He also

admires the gratuitous exhibition in natural philosophy afforded by the working of the coffee-shop steam-engine in Rathbone Place; and thinks what a quantity of coffee the people in the neighbourhood must get through, if the mill is obliged to work all day to grind it for them. He is again much gratified at the table-knives and teapots revolving on a bottle-jack



in the windows of the cheap ironmongers ; which attractive display is only exceeded in interest by a gold-beater's or a paper-stainer's ; where the arcana of those trades are displayed to the passers-by ; and he especially delights in an exhibition of filters, fountains, and gold fish.

If the Mooner patronises other ~~shop~~ windows, they are never the usually frequented ones. He cultivates cheap literature at the second-hand book-stalls ; or otherwise stops at that uninteresting class of shops which only gain our attention when we are loitering about for a coach to arrive or start. Indeed, the Mooner, in his common appearance, has the air of a person perpetually waiting for something that never arrives. We have however no right to find fault with his occupation, or rather with his entire want of any, for every man has the privilege of amusing himself in the manner *most congenial* to his own feelings ; but we

must object to entering into any conversation with the Mooner. He possesses that diverting property, which some people appear to cultivate with such care, of totally losing the point of any anecdote he relates ; and strolls and wanders just as much in his conversation as he does in his peregrinations, lingering as long on the way as a Charing Cross omnibus.

If you meet him, you cannot mention a word but it puts him in mind of a story that has no connexion at all with the subject in question. But there appears to exist an imaginary link in his brain ; and you had better see a friend on the other side of the street " whom you wish to speak to," or suffer and be silent until he has concluded.

If it should happen that the Mooner has to go from Piccadilly to Lincoln's Inn Fields, the journey lasts an entire afternoon, so many reasons for delay does he see on the road. Leaving alone the shops altogether, Leicester

Square is so attractive that he can scarcely ever leave it.

He first stops at the Walhalla and is riveted by the woodcut of Madame Warton, as Godiva, after Mr. Landseer's forthcoming picture. And then—wicked old fellow—he almost wishes he had been Peeping Tom, when the real wife of the grim Leofric performed her daring act of horsemanship.

" Then she rode forth, clothed on with chastity :
The deep air listen'd round her as she rode,
And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.
The little wide-mouth'd heads upon the spout
Had cunning eyes to see : the barking cur
Made her cheek flame : her palfrey's footfall shot
Light horrors thro' her pulses : the blind walls
Were full of chinks and holes ; and overhead
Fantastic gables, crowding, stared."

'And then he makes up his mind to get an order somewhere, and go and see her.

He next watches the man twisting wire *tbastng* forks and pipe-stoppers, until he is *almost competent to undertake the manufacture*

himself: and then gazes at the long paper alphabet of the kings of England, and coloured birds, floating out like streamers in the wind. From these he goes on to a vendor, of the class of seedy respectables, arrayed from top to toe in rusty black, and carrying an inverted saucepan-lid full of small medals, which he expresses his reasons for parting with in the following address:—

“ Now you have the last opportunity of becoming rich, and deciding the celebrated wager, of which you have read so much in the *Sunday Times*, *Bell's Life*, and the *Era*, laid at Lord John Russell's grand dinner, between Mr. Benjamin Caunt and Lord George Bentinck, as to whether it was possible to dispose of five hundred real sovereigns at one penny each before six o'clock this evening.”

He pauses an instant, and then resumes, introducing a curious, but rather indistinct feature of the Currency question:—

“ It’s against the law of the land to sell gold so cheap, therefore I let you have the case for a penny, containing two bodkins and



a darning needle, and give you the sovereign in, together with a new and favourite ball



a wedding-ring, an amusing puzzle, a five-pound note, and this pith tumbler. Hallo, my little man! there he is—heads up, Jack's alive! Now, who's the lucky buyer of the last half dozen?"

After this oration, and when he has listened to an organ playing *Buffalo Gals*, the Mooner loiters on a little farther to a stall where a man is joining cracked pieces of plate, and making pennies look like crown pieces. Having expressed his approbation of this process, he afterwards enters with vivid interest into the speech of a vendor of small Napoleons, shut up in little glass bottles; and once again rivets himself for twenty minutes in a searching chain of inquiries as to the probable mode of accomplishing this apparently impossible piece of ingenuity. He then moves forward again to the door of the Panorama; and, for the hundredth time, reads the names over the door, and wonders which of the views is most attractive.

In Cranbourne Street new sources of delay arise. He gazes at the straw bonnets until the



young women in the dingy cloaks, who stand with such unflinching pertinacity at the doors of the shops, commence thinking that he is about to become a purchaser on a large scale—perhaps for an emigration colony, who knows?

—and directly rush up and overwhelm him with such voluble panegyrics on their wares, that he is compelled to seek refuge in flight by crossing Castle Street, and plunging into that paradise of fourteen-shilling Wellington boots; small tooth-combs; pastrycooks; French prints, more or less questionable; outfitting warehouses (each with so large a stock that they have taken two or three years to sell it off, even at a tremendous sacrifice); umbrellas; Berlin wool; and travelling trunks; which connects the last-named thoroughfare with St. Martin's Lane.

And having brought him thus far, we will leave him, lost in wonder at a railway carpet-bag or an expanding portmanteau, until the next chapter; when we shall, in all probability, find him at the same place, and continue our journey with him as before.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MOONER—(CONTINUED).



KEEP company with the progress of the Mooner from Piccadilly to Lincoln's Inn, we must now walk beside him across Saint Martin's Lane.

When the sugar-plum shop was existing in New Street, it proved, next to the book-stall, *his grand resting-place*. He was riveted by

the lollipops, oyster-shells, rashers of saccharine bacon, eggs, calves' heads, legs of mutton, Albert rock, brandy-balls, and candied life-guards, which were so temptingly displayed therein. But now the shop has gone—whither we know not, but incline to the idea that it was gradually sucked away by the legion of sweet-toothed little boys who whilome clustered round its windows—so the Mooner passes on without stopping, except for a minute at the Lilliputian warehouse, where the tiny socks and shoes call forth all his admiration; and he cannot exactly understand how the little gloves, that appear to be flying all about the window like so many kid butterflies, are attached to the panes of glass. His only other source of delay may be to listen to the catalogue of a perambulating melodist, who appears anxious to dispose of many yards of new and favourite songs for a penny. We would give a report of the merchant's oration, but the subject is worn out.

When the Mooner has once entered the middle thoroughfare of Covent Garden Market, half-an-hour elapses before he makes his appearance at the other end of the avenue. He raises or depresses his nose to smell every plant and bouquet that he may chance to pass, and inquires the price of every potte of early potatoes on his road. This he does with an earnestness of manner that almost inclines the seller to think he is about giving a fashionable dinner-party, where, of course, the greatest point to make it go off well is, to persuade each of your guests to eat nine immature French beans, and two small potatoes about the size of bird's eggs, with an apparent indifference as to the extent of consumption that may induce your friends to believe you are in the habit of dining from such dainties every day, as long as they are out of season—or, at least, sufficiently removed from their proper time of perfection to render them perfectly tasteless.

The rest of the journey is performed by the Mooner in an uncertain space of time, varying in accordance with the number of play-bills he may encounter, the accidental upset of a patent safety-cab, or the sudden outbreak of a street row. If the latter of these causes should be drawn to a sudden close by the interference of the police, he may possibly digress to the left, as far as the Bow Street Office; but should it pass off quietly, his only other grand delay will be at the stage-door of Drury-lane, where he passes away a pleasant half-hour in endeavouring to recognise the histrionic talent that passes in and out that mysterious portal in the unambitious toilet of a morning rehearsal.

There are various parts of London frequented by the Mooners, where, like roach pitches in the Thames, you are almost certain to find a specimen of the tribe. On fine days they delight to bask in the sun upon the floating piers of



the fourpenny steam-boats ; and at all times the erection of a new club-house, or foundation of a new lamp-post, is a sure piece of ground-bait to entice them. They collect in great numbers round the Houses of Parliament on favourable afternoons, gazing listlessly at the cabs and led horses of the honourable members ; and above all, they love to lean over the parapet of London Bridge, loitering away the hours in watching *the bustle of the Pool*, the slow progress of the

lighters, and the departure of the Gravesend, Woolwich, and Boulogne steamers. The Mooner does not often venture on board these latter craft because, once there, whatever may be the inducement to stop, *he must go on*—a species of comparative progression which does not at all suit his habits; and for this very reason, he prefers the most obsolete stage-coach to the whisking railway.

En reste, the Mooner is a harmless being; not susceptible of any extreme pleasure; but, on the other hand, equally insensible with regard to extreme discomfort. He dawdles through life as he does in the excursion we have just described; and when he dies, goes to the grave in the same loitering manner, almost regretting that he cannot attend his own funeral, to watch it pass, and afterwards go with it into the cemetery and read all the tombstones.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE MOONER AT AN OLD TAVERN.



WE have occasionally encounter many Mooners in the quiet taverns of Fleet Street, where they are apt to dine, because the gravity and absence of anything like bustle in those steady eating houses harmonises well with their disposition. They are comfortable places, too—the

old Fleet Street taverns—and they carry the thoughts back to those days when Dr. Johnson blew his cloud—we are not exactly following his lexicographical definition of words—by the side of the old-fashioned fire-place, and occasionally floored some unhappy wight with the sledge-hammer of his conversation—specimens of which are so agreeably brought in amongst the anecdotes of the Colossus of our language which sparkle in Boswell's autobiography.

But we are not going to enter into the details of their associations ; they have been as “thoroughly done” as the “singl' mutt'n” shouted up stairs by the waiter to the kitchen functionary of the Cheshire Cheese. The aforesaid Boswell gave the cue, by getting the Doctor to agree with him, that Greenwich Park was not equal to Fleet Street ; and then everybody followed in the same track, and we had “Recollections of Fleet Street,” and “Summer Afternoon in Fleet Street,” and “Pilgrim

ages in Fleet Street," and "Fine Days in Fleet Street," and "Residences in the Courts of Fleet Street," until, like guide-books in general, when the writers had all copied one from the other until every plagiarism was known by heart, they came to an end. To these recollections of the past we refer our readers—our business is only with the present.

There is a similar character pertaining to all these haunts—an antique room with a sanded floor, and adorned with a smoke-discoloured paper, which, if removed at any time with a view towards beautifying the apartment, has invariably injured the business of the house, and driven away the Mooners. Some have faded curtains between the feeding-stalls ; and on the mantelpiece, before the old looking-glass, may possibly be placed two tumblers full of wooden pipelights—*allumettes* is the more refined term—and a pewter inkstand, containing a black *dry coagulum* which was once ink, and a nibless

pen. There is a clock that ticks with a solemn and subdued beat, and a weather-glass of grave aspect, celebrated for its inverse predictions of coming change. Even the flies that linger about these localities have an antique air; they are evidently not of the same race that bustle about Verey's windows, amongst the cakes and bonbons; but these march about the table amidst the crumbs with an important gravity, induced by their having used the house a long time, and thus established themselves upon terms of the most intimate familiarity with the frequenters.

A rash landlord once made an attempt at innovation by hanging a play-bill upon one of the hat pegs; but it was met with intense indignation on the part of the Mooners, and was forthwith taken down—the void thus occasioned being filled up again by a framed advertisement of some pale ale of peculiar merit. Elsewhere a portrait of some favourite waiter of other days may be seen “delivered in trust to

the landlord ; " and there is a vision of numerous punch-bowls through the window of the bar, which looks into the room, and sometimes discloses a young beaming face, belonging to the guardian nymph of the lemons and lumps of sugar, in pleasing contrast with the antique fittings-up of the room.

A remarkable idiosyncrasy amongst the Mooners, and more especially at the Cheshire Cheese, is displayed in their detention of the different newspapers, and principally of the solitary evening journal provided for their entertainment. William, the waiter, never unfolds the *Standard*, as Pischek sings, so might he :—

“ *Getreu der Fahne, der ich zugeschworen !* ”
but keeps it cautiously hidden under his coat, and walks mysteriously about, sliding it into the hands of the fortunate recipients as if it was a contraband article. The average time to wait for this paper is one hour and a half, if bribery is not resorted to ; for William, though a waiter, is



mortal; and a glimpse at its contents may sometimes be obtained surreptitiously, at the sacrifice of honour and fair play. Should the Mooner get hold of it, although two or three other customers are waiting for it, he heeds them not; - he goes regularly through the paper, from

the first advertisement to the imprint, with a prolixity that induces expectants to think he either cannot spell very fluently, or that his comprehension is not over rapid, much to the annoyance of the others, some of whom have refreshed themselves with the advertisements of the outside half of the *Times* for the last twenty minutes.

The aforesaid William is regarded by the Mooners as a confidant and affectionate friend : by others as one to bully and command. The former speak to him, in soft and under tones, of tender steaks, and chops not too much done ; the latter, perhaps high-mettled Templars, swear at, and otherwise crow over him.

But there is a patriarchal simplicity and confiding courtesy in William which turns away the edge of anger, and makes it blunt as the Cheshire Cheese knives.

William will need no picture, like his predecessor. We have now immortalized him.



CHAPTER IX.

OF THE LOWTHER ARCADE, VIEWED WITH
RESPECT TO THE IDLER.



HIS celebrated Museum of the products of foreign industry is open to the Idler every day, Sundays excepted, from eight in the morning to an uncertain hour of the evening, varying according to the commercial inclinations of the inhabi-

tants. Admittance is readily obtained at either end, from the West Strand or Adelaide Street; the entrance being guarded in both cases by beadles of imposing aspect, whose chief business is to strike awe into the souls of vagrant boys, and protect the pass from brigands, to do which they are each empowered to carry the standard of the brazen knob. Their jurisdiction extends over the pavement immediately before the entrance, but not beyond the kerb; from which position they may be insulted with impunity, as is frequently the case.

The first idea that strikes the Idler upon entering is, most probably, that the houses have been turned out of window, and the contents of their shops shot upon the ground by some architectural avalanche. Indeed, the greatest caution is necessary in threading your way amongst the labyrinth of goods on every side, *the most fragile* generally being placed



where they can be readily kicked over and broken. Like the entanglement of a fly in the cobweb, which caused the spider to dart from his abode, this accident generally produces the owner of the property, who lies in wait in some secret corner, and upon hearing the fracture pounces out with inconceivable rapidity upon the thoughtless victim. Indeed, it is in the delicate arrangement of their wares that the merchants of the Lowther Arcade display the most extraordinary ingenuity, and mechanical dexterity; for every article forms the

key-stone to an elaborate arrangement of its companions, and you cannot move it without bringing all the rest down at the same time.

Up to the present time there has been no proper catalogue of the objects exhibited, and so, in some cases, the Idler relies upon his imagination to define them. This is sometimes difficult—perhaps very much so—in the Dutch toy-boxes of bouquets and feasts, on some of the plates of which are viands of singularly obscure character, more especially amongst the wooden pastry. It is also no easy task to make out the exact regiments to which the various horse and foot soldiers belong, several hundreds of which are nightly bivouacked in the Lowther Arcade, who would doubtless be found useful in putting down any mutiny in the Noah's Arks, did such an event occur.

A singular procession of rampant rocking-



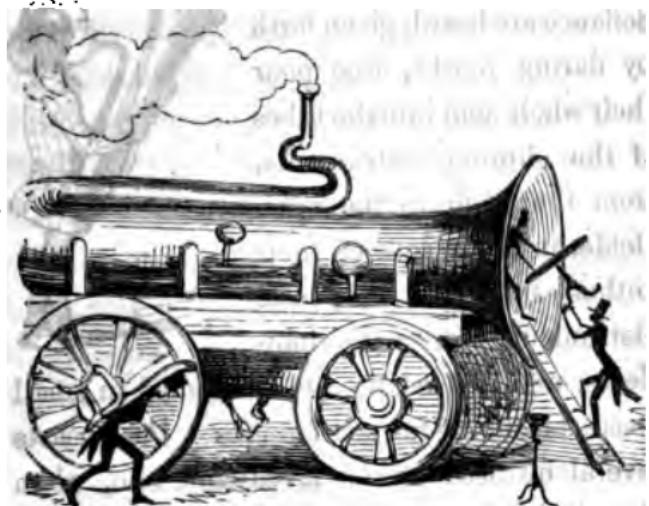
horses, who appear galloping up the side of the house, one after another, leaving the common Dutch nags of various dimensions upon the dull earth below, conducts the eye of the visitor to the windows of Mr. Pask, the musician. Mr. Pask owns two shops, in front of one of which the Idler is always delayed: it is properly for the sale of accordions—musical instruments which appear indigenous to arcades generally, from the one in question, to the Passage d'Herlin at Boulogne, and so on to the Galerie Colbert at Paris, and still further, for aught we know.

But the Idler's gaze is not riveted by the accordions—the clock-work toys are the attractions: and of all those absurd creations, the old monkey marquis playing the fiddle is the king. The way in which he beats time—the elegance of his bowing—his enraptured smile at a touching passage, and general self-complacency, are delicious.

The Idler next passes on to the music shop; and occasionally from its *entresol* strange sounds and pealing blasts of defiance are heard, given forth by daring youths, who pour their whole soul into the tubes of the shining instruments, from the bugle to the ophicleide, in the ardour of their enthusiasm. A soft and gentle instrument, too, is the ophicleide, and well adapted to be studied in small houses belonging to quiet families. Pask boasts several of these brazen Leviathans, who, when disturbed from their repose by mortal breath, give a sullen roar that reverberates along the Arcade like thunder, and drowns the accordonic strains which issue from a neighbouring *dépôt* for the sale of those musical bellows. The ophicleides get bigger and *bigger each day*, and it is impossible to tell



at what pitch of monstrous magnitude they will ultimately arrive. We shall not be surprised if they finally form the abodes of the men who



play them; an accommodation which will be very valuable to perambulating musicians at the seasons of the various Festivals.

The next stoppages are those caused by the stalls of the Turk and his daughter, or wife, or niece, who sell the pastilles, sachets,

and soap. He is immediately lost in dreams of the Arabian Nights—all his old friends, Haroun Alrashcid, Geaffir, Camaralzaman, Abon Hassan, the Calanders, Camaralzaman and Noureddin (we *will* spell them our own way, in spite of Mr. Lane's translation) rise up again; and it is not until he is pushed about into his senses again, that he retakes them. He is next struck by the representation of two headless gentlemen in a hunting-coat and dressing-gown at an adjacent tailor's. They are placed behind a brass barrier, and have something very awful in their appearance. The legend attached to them is unknown; but they possibly represent *the guillotined* victims of some revolution—





probably the same in which fell the decapitated ladies at the staymakers in Berners' Street, whose heads are supposed to have migrated to the windows of some of the hair-dressers in the neighbourhood.

One word, in conclusion, to the proprietors. We are well aware that, when the gates are shut and the porters on the watch, the interior of the Lowther Arcade is considered impregnable. But we would point out especially at the present time the possibility of an invading force, forcing an entrance through the postern of the pastry-cook's shop at the Strand end (which communicates with both thoroughfares), were the premises at a future period to be occupied by a less respectable tenant. This is the weakest point of the passage, and might be soon carried by a handful of resolute assailants bent upon taking any of the Dutch villages, or storming any of the encampments which abound in the interior; to which assault

the whole of the cavalry at present in the Arcade, including the rocking-horses, could offer but a feeble resistance. We merely throw out these hints by way of caution—we leave the owners of the above-mentioned property to act upon them.





CHAPTER X.

OF THE PARK IDLER.



AT the height of the season, when the Park is full, it is enough to make a Londoner speculate upon where all the horses come from, and more particularly where so many are kept, as he looks upon the hundreds that canter about the ride and greensward.

For the "first-class" Idler the Park is a

grand resource. He lounges amongst the company, who surround the band in Kensington Gardens, which all comes under the Park strail, and recognises many friends; indulges in short flirting walks along the northern edge—we cannot call it bank—of the river; and, not keeping a carriage himself, at all events thinks it gratifying to know somebody who does, and receive a bow from the inmates.

The carriages are the Idler's great attractions; and he will pass hours in watching the procession, going round and round like the things on a clock-work picture, and always coming again in the same order. And there are many varieties to watch, on a fine afternoon, in Hyde Park. "Heavy old family coaches"—we are quoting ourselves, reader, in preference to any one else, having the same faith in our own way of mixing materials, as certain of our friends (and we are sure of yours too) have in *making salad* from their own receipt in pre-

ference to taking another's—heavy old family coaches, then, are there, with coachmen and horses to match, and the most wonderful old ladies inside that ever were seen—equipages that creep out year after year with their panels re-varnished, and their brass-work re-lacquered, slowly coming forth like the shoot of an old stump when summer approaches, and disappearing when it is over, together with the old ladies; new barouches, blazing with escutcheons like theatrical banners, and liveries almost like harlequins, just started by "stuck-up people" living on the borders of the exclusive world, and constantly fighting to pass its frontier; mail-phaetons driven by men-upon-town, who have gone round and round the Park for thirty years, and still cling to the peculiar hats, cravats, and general demeanour, that distinguished them when they commenced their career, long before the bushy wig associated so badly with the thin straggling whiskers;

whose every hair was valued and its position known, upon the lined face.

There are Broughams, too, with the blinds half down, and small dogs looking out of the window; within which may be seen faces once fair, and still with sufficient beauty to attract attention, but knowing no medium of complexion between the pallor of a worn and wretched mind, and the flaunting bloom of paint; slowly toiling round and round—as they had done yesterday, as they would do again to-morrow—without a recognition of the most distant acquaintance from any of the countless throng, except, may be, a covert nod from the Park Idlers themselves.

And these are leaning against the posts, more heart-weary of doing nothing, more lonely in that great mass of life, than any convict enjoying the united charms of hard labour and solitary confinement; and, whilst their looking-glass is obscured with cards and notes of invitation—three and four for the same night—do

not know one house in all the world of town where they can drop in quietly and unexpectedly for an evening's simple chat, typified by the old-fashioned, abolished "cup of tea."

The Idler, though, scans all the faces besides those in the Broughams, only taking no notice of the one-horse chaises. For you frequently see them in the Park—good down-right vulgar one-horse four-wheeled chaises, that ought never to be imagined anywhere else but going over Hammersmith Bridge on a Sunday. But the Idler remarks, that to strengthen the claims of these vehicles to plebeian distinction they always have four people in them—the two behind appearing to revel in that excitement of frightful insecurity which is constantly attendant upon that position in similar vehicles, from the chance of being suddenly left behind in the road. These chaises do not look at their ease in the Park. They are not discontented chaises generally, in matters of dia-

tance and load; but they are scarcely used to such society. They appear aware that large cotton umbrellas, turnpike roads, detached double villas, brandy and water, leather gloves, and a shilling for the ostler, are the associations usually called forth by their appearance.



theatre, and the *flâneur* is the *gent* of the theatre.

CHAPTER XI.

OF THE LOUNGER AT THE THEATRE.



THE regular theatrical *flâneur* must not be confounded with the *Gent*. There is this difference—the former really goes to see the play; and if he looks round the house, it is only during the *entr'actes*, to find out if there is anybody he knows; when, if he is also discovered, he gives a quiet nod of recognition, and that is all. He is always at the first night.

of any piece or performer that excites some little interest; and is in himself an entertaining chronicler of theatrical events, with the exception that he bores you too much about the actors of his day, always swearing that there has never been anybody like them since. This may be all very well, but we can conceive Malibran to have been every bit as great as Mrs. Siddons; and possibly were we to see any of the others now, should be grievously disappointed. We think this, because at the time the gods and goddesses of the old theatrical Idler's idolatry existed, people crowded to see, and *sit out*, the melancholy twaddle of the *School of Reform* or the sickly cant of the *Stranger*. And tastes may have improved quite as much with regard to actors, as they certainly are with respect to the fine old heavy yawn-inducing, headache-provoking, temper-spoiling, age-moulded, slow-coach-collecting, conventionality-loving, treasury-impoverishing, theatre-venti-

lating—oh! for Rabelais to help us with some more epithetical conglomerations—actor-spoiling, manager-ruining, coarse-allusion-loving, blush-exciting “standard legitimacy” that assisted to swell the repertory of Inchbald’s British Theatre.

The theatrical Idler is, in another phase, a young man of some position, who goes night after night, with regular perseverance, to see the same pieces and performers, never coming in until the evening is far advanced, and not paying very great attention to the stage, but constantly sweeping the house with his double opera-glass. Here again he must not be confounded with the Gents, who come in at half-price, splashed and great-coated, and, standing up at the backs of the boxes, begin to talk and make dreary jokes, rejoicing especially in the Adelphi. No; the young Idler joins with certain friends in a pit tier private box, either for the night, which is decided upon suddenly,



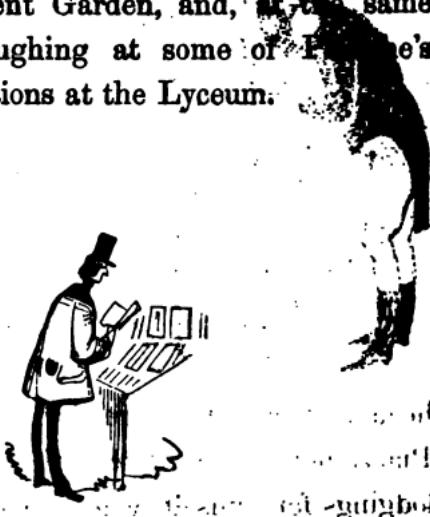
after a club-dinner; or for the season, when it becomes an Omnibus, and its *habitués* have the privilege of passing through the door of communication to the stage, and talking to the

deities of the *coulisses*, as much and as often as either party pleases.

The Opera Idler is nearly the same person, at another period of the year. You see him, *gibus* hat in hand, lounging round the pit, under the boxes, or taking his station in the middle doorway to speak to those who go in or out. He does not much affect the stalls, because he cannot move there; he prefers constantly changing his place, to be thrown in contact with fresh persons; and if he knows no one near him, he accompanies the music on the stage with a low hum.

If the Opera Idler anticipates a crowded night, so that his promenade is filled up by the late comers, he never takes the outside place on a row of seats, because he may be asked to give it up to a lady. Finding none beside, he scans the house, sees who is there, and makes the time pass in a succession of evening calls, staying longest where he is most intimate.

If you want to know who these Idlers are, you must look at the paragraphs in the papers which commence "Amongst the company present we noticed;" and there, towards the end, you will see all their names. The curious thing is that they are everywhere every night; and must possess some supernatural ubiquity which enables them, whilst enjoying the opera at Her Majesty's Theatre, to be equally delighted at Covent Garden, and, at the same time, to be laughing at some of Fortune's graceful productions at the Lyceum.



CHAPTER XII.

OF THE VISITOR TO LONDON.



ALTHOUGH the visitor is a provincial by birth, yet he ranks as one of the London Idlers the instant he arrives in town ; indeed, the more remote his country residence may be, the more entitled is he to be classed as such.

When alone, his head-quarters are merely coach-office inns and Piazza hotels ; but if married, he takes furnished lodgings for himself, wife, and (according to cir-

cumstances) daughters, in Arundel or Norfolk Street, which a friend has probably engaged for him.

An author has stated that the pleasure of travelling consists not so much in the enjoyment of the present, as the retrospection of the past; and this is possibly the idea upon which the visitor acts, since his whole journey is a series of nuisances from beginning to end. The first discomfort begins at the terminus of the railway, where he cannot remember which locker his luggage was put into, and, consequently, a losing the omnibus during the search, is compelled to hire a cab at a quadruple fare. Then lost bag, portmanteau, or whatever it may be, is at last found under the seat he had been occupying; after the railway porters, in their strenuous exertions to discover the property, have concealed themselves successively in every locker, with only their legs visible, like so many bees half-way up a train of bell-flowers,

or, more correctly, like Mr. W. H. Payne when that eccentric gentleman shuts himself into a door in a pantomime.

At length the visitor arrives at his apartment, after encountering dangers on his journey to which the perils of the Khyber Pass were but minor annoyances; and then the usual first-night-in-a-new-lodging discomforts crowd upon him.

There is no tea, no bread, no candles, salt, or lump-sugar; everything has to be purchased, and when purchased, to be stowed away in various chiffoniers of that shabby-genteel appraisement-looking build which one only encounters in furnished lodgings, with creaking hinges, faded curtains in front, rusty keys, and rickety locks that only the landlady can open. And there is a sad cheerless air in lodgings. The very furniture has a sharp and famished appearance, although rubbed up to the last point of friction, and the carpet is brushed until it is

threadbare. The hundred insignificant objects that made home HOME—those remote appealers to our feeling, although only books, pictures, or children's toys littered about—are nowhere visible. The very chairs have an expression of outline which seems to say, “I am only yours whilst you pay for me;” the fire-irons and fender look cold and formal; and the round mirror, with its frame of gilt knobs and distorted candelabra, has an air of attempted gaiety, that is perfectly distressing to contemplate.

And when the visitor awakes on the first morning of his sojourn in town—which he does at an early hour, after a slumber broken at intervals of every twenty minutes by the never-dying murmur of the London streets—his first business at breakfast is to spread the map of London widely open before him, and commence a deep investigation of the nearest practicable road from one point to another. Short cuts *proverbially* take up the most time to accom-

plish; and for this reason the visitor spends half his day in losing himself in a labyrinth of courts and alleys. Having decided upon the first sight that he shall visit, he sallies forth, and commences the undertaking by discovering the residence of a friend, to whom he has given two days' shooting last year, and upon whom he reckons to run about with him all day long, and show him the Lions of the Metropolis.

All persons living in London know what country friends are—useful people, who send them up pork and eggs, and whom they delight to go and stay with when they are tired of town; but whom they are sometimes shy of introducing to their metropolitan circle. Our old friend, Mr. Ledbury, has some country friends; and every year two of the girls come up to stay with his family. Fine healthy strapping young women they are, too, who can walk for ever and never feel tired; and although Mr. Ledbury sometimes feels uncomfortable when

he is gallanting them about the Colliseum, and pretends not to see Miss Mitchell and Miss Hamilton, whom he meets, but looks hard at the works of art there displayed, yet his importance and gratification are very great when he takes places for them at the Lyceum. Then they go and return in a hackney-coach, and he tells them which is Mr. Harley, and Mr. Buckstone, and Miss Kathleen Fitzwilliam, and Madame Vestris, as they come on the stage, without ever looking at the play-bill; or explains the story, if it is a burlesque, interlude, or ballet; and adjusts the binocular-glass for them, which he hired at the oyster-shop in Vinegar Yard before they went, but which the young ladies cannot use very well without shutting the left eye with their hand.

Upon the taste of the London friend, should lie be disengaged, depends the class of *wonders* which the visitor is introduced to—*of course, provided always, that the friend is*

not “extremely sorry an unpleasant engagement prevents him from enjoying the pleasure he would otherwise have felt, in showing his acquaintance whatever was most worth seeing in London.” One will consider a walk round the parks, a stroll up Regent Street, and a glimpse of the clubs, everything to be looked at. Another will not rest until he has taken the visitor to every shilling exhibition between Bond Street and Temple Bar. And a third has an idea that, like at Naples, a man has only to see the Docks and Post-office, and then die.

The wide difference between the West-end and the oriental districts of London, is no chimerical distinction, and we can prove this by the following anecdote :—

Mr. Elphinstone was a gentleman—that is to say, he kept a cab and all sorts of things besides—wore moustachios and white kid gloves, *lived in May Fair*, and was a member of one

or two clubs. But, although he affected an idea in society that London terminated in space somewhere about Charing Cross, he had an aunt who resided in Finsbury Square; and as he expected to come in for a share of the property, he thought one day he would pay her a visit. Accordingly, he presented himself at her house in a travelling cap and large cloak.

“My dear nephew,” said the old lady, “are you going off anywhere?”

“No, my dear aunt,” replied Mr. Elphinstone, “I am but just arrived.”

“Where from?” asked the aunt.

“At present from the Albany,” was the answer.

“Ah,” responded the old lady, doubtfully, imagining, no doubt, that the Albany was some place on the Rhine. “And when did you start?”

“About half-an-hour ago.”

“*My dear nephew,*” exclaimed the aunt, “*what are you talking about?*”

“A very simple affair,” said Elphinstone: “I live at the West-end—you reside in Finsbury Square. Being desirous of paying you a visit, I got out my travelling attire, and having gone down to Messrs. Herries and Co.’s for some of their circular notes, I procured a post-chaise from Newman’s, and started from home at one o’clock. I have arrived here safely, as you see—and I shall return to London in the same manner.”

Since that time Mr. Elphinstone has always used the same means to pay a visit to his aunt, who, it is hoped, will leave him sufficient to prevent his ever paying the like attention to his uncle. We only quote this anecdote to show that, with all properly educated people, Finsbury Square has nothing in common with London; and that its inhabitants know as much about the West-end, as a frequenter of the gallery at Sadler’s Wells does of the *Omnibus box at the Operas.*

CHAPTER XIII.

THE VISITOR TO LONDON—(CONTINUED).



HETHER he discovers his friend or not, nothing can exceed the ardour with which the visitor gives himself up to sight-seeing; for it is chiefly upon folks from the

country that the exhibitions depend. In town everybody is too much occupied with his own affairs to run after shows; but the visitor sees the *accounts of them* in the newspapers, and rushes

up to behold them. No sense of weariness stops him. The dioramas, cosmoramas, and panoramas, give him the ubiquitous power of being in every quarter of the globe at once. China, Cabool, Rome, Cairo, and Waterloo, are all visited within four-and-twenty hours. He revels amongst the dusty wonders of the British Museum ; he makes the tours of the rival Zoological Gardens, and walks round all the squares ; he goes over the Tower, and finishes each day at one of the theatres ; until his head gets so confused with a whirl of objects, that in a short time he is happy to enter the terminus of the railway once more, on his way home, laden with all sorts of curious rubbish.

It is not because the visitor to London has a mere thirst for sight-seeing, that he takes such indefatigable pains ; but he thinks of the future—of his return to his country town—of the wonder he shall excite amongst the

aborigines of his locality, by detailing the strange things that he has witnessed. We have stated that the retrospection is better than the voyage ; we might have added, that people travel not so much for the sake of travelling itself, as to talk afterwards of what they have seen, and to show that they are not behind their neighbours. On the same plan, the smoker does not delight so much in the flavour of his cigar, in spite of all he may say to the contrary, as in the pleasure of puffing the light-blue vapour from his mouth, and watching it rise and curl so capriciously in the air. This must be the reason why, with few exceptions, blind people do not smoke, and dumb people do not travel.

If the visitor ever experiences a mortification, it is when he hears some sight spoken of in the country which he did not see whilst he *was* in London. And this is a plan which *certain wicked wits* make use of to cut short

any overdone description the visitor may be indulging in. For example: the visitor is amusing a gaping crowd with a long detail of the Thames Tunnel; a jocular auditor, who also knows London, inquires if he does not think the tunnel from the Old Bailey to Bloomsbury Square, under Holborn Hill, far superior to Brunel's undertaking.

This certainly is a question to take a man aback. It would put him out of countenance had he the diplomatic impenetrability of Tallyrand, or the "London Assurance" of Cool, when he says with such unflinching audacity, "No, sir; that's not Master Charles."

"The Holborn Hill tunnel!" exclaims the visitor timidly.

"Yes, to be sure," returns his pleasant friend; "most undoubtedly the grandest work in London."

After a few hesitating seconds, the visitor, determined not to be outdone, will probably

affirm that he has seen the tunnel in question, and that it is a most magnificent monument of human perseverance !

And, by the way, it is a good plan, generally speaking, if you have told a lie in company, to stick to it, come what may. Not less useful to your progress in society is it, to make up your mind never to be outdone by a boaster. If such-a-one says, with an air of superiority, that he keeps a yacht, directly affirm that you have a man-of-war of your own private property. It is equally serviceable to drop as much below the mark as to soar above it; and when you hear a "fine" man at an evening party lamenting aloud that "his fellow had not brought his cab," be very polite, and tell him you expect your private truck every moment, when part of it is entirely at his service.

The visitor, although he ~~has~~ seen the principal objects of interest in the Metropolis, *including the House of Lords and Bedlam,*

the House of Commons and St. Luke's—the saloons of the theatres, and cemeteries of the suburbs—the banquet at Guildhall, and the beasts feeding at the Zoological Gardens, &c., &c., is still desirous of viewing something else; and finding he has been to the top of every practical elevation in London, commences his descending excursions, and visits the Magic Cave, the "Judge and Jury," the Dock wine-vaults, and the diving-bell at the Polytechnic, concluding, as a grand *coup*, by going to Weip-pert's, where he is uneasy to find that his toilet is not altogether the full dress which he considered it at home.

Of course, the visitor does not see all these marvels without a proportionate outlay, and a corresponding loss of innumerable pocket-handkerchiefs and uncounted umbrellas. Inhabitants of the rural districts, when in town, are fair game for everybody to victimize, and resemble pigeons that have got out of bounds at the

Red House. Everywhere the stranger has the chance, as he thinks, of proving himself a shrewd man of business, by yielding to the confidential address of some great tobacco-merchant in disguise, whom he meets in the streets, and who whispers to him that "he has a few good Awanners if he wants any." He is doomed to be again taken in. After following the merchant down a back street, up a court, and into some small room, the approach to which lies over a water-butt, along a wooden gutter, and through a trap-door, he is frightened out of his wits by sundry threats, and compelled to purchase an indefinite number of small dingy cylinders, formed of cabbage-leaves boiled in tobacco-juice, and apocryphally termed cigars.

The visitor may think himself fortunate if he gets a friend to accompany him; but he is ten times more so if this friend is not one of those uncomfortable quizzers we have before alluded to, for the stranger is always an easy

victim to their pleasantries. His inexperience and easy desire to learn everything throw him completely at the mercy of his friend.

The quizzer and his companion, for example, are walking down Regent Street.

"You see that tall fair man with a large beard and moustachios, in at Very's, eating ices?" says the Londoner.

"Precisely so—with the lavender gloves."

"Well—that's John Parry."



"Bless me!" exclaims the provincial: "I must see him closer." And he directly rushes into Very's, and eats three ices, which give him the stomach-ache, for the pleasure, as he imagines, of sitting near the celebrated Buffo.

He has scarcely left the shop when his friend tells him that the fanatic-looking person with the long beard and thin legs, who prays aloud as he walks along, is Charles Dickens, and next points out another small man with red hair as Titmarsh, immediately afterwards showing him Sir Robert Peel, Lola Montez, Mr. Hudson, and Dr. Pusey, all in one carriage.

It is needless to add how highly delighted the visitor feels, upon returning home, at having been fortunate enough to see so many celebrated characters in the short space of one stroll.





CHAPTER XIV.

THE STREET BOY.



ONSCIOUS that we should be guilty of an act of great injustice in omitting to make mention of the subject of our present chapter amongst the other London Idlers, he being the greatest of them all, we hasten to give him a place in our gallery of pen-and-ink drawings.

The Street Boy is as peculiar to the metropolis, as his prototype, the *gamin*, is to Paris.

He has a shrewdness of observation, a precocious cunning, and, above all, an art of annoying, which we look for in vain amidst the youth of the rural districts. We confess, that for all our usually placid disposition, when walking in the streets we cannot stand the sarcasms of the little boys. They are like mosquitoes, who sting and buzz about you, but are never to be caught; and whether they make an allusion to your white trousers, your long hair, or your peculiar hat, with observations similar to "Voudn't I have a pair o' ducks," "I never see sech a mop," or, "Oh, my! vot a lummy tile," the shaft is sure to rankle a wound much deeper than you give it credit for. He is most acutely annoying to the foreign gentleman, when he catches him off the pavement of Regent Street (for the Street Boy does not often venture thereon), and delights his companions by marching after him with a droll imitative gait, or drawing attention to the flower-pot on *his* head.



The Street Boy forms the most important part of the audience to all the out-of-doors exhibitions. His laugh is the loudest, his applause the most vigorous, and his remarks the most forcible; but at the same time his voluntary contribution

is the worst. This principally arises from his never having any money—a circumstance which drives him to seek gratuitous amusements, in which he, nevertheless, finds far more pleasure than in those paid for by the superior orders. Where the monied Idler pays a shilling to descend in the car of a centrifugal railway, he procures the same excitement for nothing, by sliding down the hand-rail of the steps at the Duke of York's column. On grand occasions, when the wealthy hire a coach to go round and see the illumination, or other spectacle, he rides on the spikes behind, gratis; and, indeed, as connected with every species of parasitical carriage exercise, he appears to be case-hardened against any mechanical invention to render the position disagreeable. He sees the balloon, when it is up, just as well from Kennington Lane as from the interior of the gardens; and the same remark applies to a cheap view of the Siege of Gibraltar over the palings.

If there is one amusement upon which the Street Boy does not hesitate to expend the few pence he has picked up by holding horses, going on errands, or carrying carpet-bags from the railway and steam-boats, it is the theatre; and this arises more especially from a disinclination on the part of most managers to allow people to walk into their houses for nothing. In the gallery he is in his true glory. His very elevated situation gives him a feeling of superiority, and he is aware that his cry for an encore, or pleasant remark addressed to the orchestra, will have as much weight—nay, far more—than if it proceeded from an occupant of the dress-circle. Nobody but himself can give that force of expression to “Now then, you catgut-scrappers; strike up there!” Next to the prompter, no one like him can regulate the scene-shifters: the single word “higher,” is sufficient to induce them to raise the obtrusive sky borders when they are in the way of something at the back

of the stage ; and the most independent actor feels called upon to display extra energy when our hero shouts the dictatorial " speak up," from his lofty position. It is through his exertions, vocal and bodily, that a seat is procured for his friend " Fluffy Jack," who comes in at half-price ; and his " *order*," and " turn him out," are as magisterial commands to the attendant policemen. He rewards any clever piece of mechanism, or agile leap of the harlequin (for it must be stated that the pantomime chiefly attracts him), by the appropriate exclamation, " Bravo, Rouse!" and he is one of the most animated whistle solo performers on his two fingers that you would meet with ; indeed, by some extraordinary anatomical peculiarity it seems impossible for any one above the rank of a butcher's apprentice, ever to produce the peculiar shrill note in question. We, ourselves, have no hesitation in confessing that we have tried to do it for hours together, and never



got beyond a noise somewhat resembling that produced by blowing a pair of bellows into an empty ginger-beer bottle.

A singular antipathy to work of any description, is a leading characteristic of the Street Boy. This does not depend upon a lack of perseverance, as he can play the castanets

upon his set of bones like an Ethiopian, spin a top or hurl a stone with unerring effect, and produce tunes upon his cheeks and chin with singular precision ; all which evidences of skill must have cost him much pains to acquire. Neither should we overlook the incomprehensible ingenuity he displays in putting on his clothes, in which he generally contrives to make one single button and a bit of string perform all the function, which those of a higher grade require at least a dozen to accomplish.

When the Street Boy gives himself up to idle for the whole day on the strength of a few accidental coppers, his favourite lounge is in the vicinity of a baked-potato can—proprietors of which machine appear of late to have established certain *côteries* and *réunions* around them. He has minutely studied the economy of these *al fresco* restaurateurs. He sees the advantage of keeping the butter always to leeward, and he knows the jet of steam, intended to be expres-

sive of intense caloric reigning amongst the potatoes, has nothing at all to do with them—no more than the furious exhibition of vapour which appears to proceed from the dog-tarts in the windows of the St. Giles's confectioners.

The consumption of pickled whelks, oysters as big as soup-plates, and immature apples, or small black cherries, depends chiefly upon his patronage. When the Regent Street Lounger, fatigued and thirsty, takes an ice at Very's or *limonade gazeuse* in the Pantheon, the Street Boy indulges in some curds and whey in Drury Lane, or a bottle of penny ginger-beer in the New Cut.

The only individual of whom the Street Boy stands in awe is the policeman. He looks upon all square-keepers and beadles as so many large puppets to shoot his wit at; but he is afraid of the policeman, and there is no denying it. The only place where he throws off a portion of his fear is, as we have stated, the

gallery of the playhouse ; and then he relies principally upon his remote situation, or the practical difficulty of being approached through the unaccommodating masses that surround him.

Our business at present is merely with the boy. When he grows up he loses most of his attributes, and either becomes an errand carrier, or a light porter—perhaps even a policeman ; or, being detected in various acts of unlawful appropriation, becomes a traveller, and finishes his career by a grand tour to the regions of the Pacific Ocean.

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